# CLUE IS SOUGHT IN HANDWRITING OF MARY PHAGAN

Reporter of The Constitution

Is Summoned by Solicitor

General Hugh M. Dorsey

for Conference.

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# *OFFICIALS INVESTIGATE*

## *THEORY OF MYSTERY*

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# Much Interest Is Created by the Report That a New Arrest May Be Made in the Near Future.

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The handwriting of Mary Phagan is likely to play a prominent part in the investigation of her murder. Rumors came Tuesday from the solicitor general's office that new clues had been discovered in the form of notes or letters, and that much energy was being concentrated in investigation along that line.

Handwriting experts have been summoned before Mr. Dorsey this morning. A reporter for The Constitution who has several specimens of the murdered girl's handwriting has also been ordered to appear at the solicitor's office this morning at 10 o'clock.

It is reported that mysterious notes have been found by a number of the solicitor's staff, and that Mr. Dorsey's object is to identify, by the specimens in the reporter's possession, the

Phagan girl's script. It also has been advanced that the strange notes caused the new theory on which the solicitor is working.

Mr. Dorsey and his entire office staff is unusually reticent about the rumored clues. He will neither deny or affirm the report that notes or letters of any character pertaining to the mystery have been discovered.

"To talk at present," he said, "would be disastrous. We must have time to verify our theory."

**Dorsey Interviews Mrs. Barrett.**

Mrs. Mary Barrett, a woman who is said to have been in the pencil factory the Saturday afternoon that Mary Phagan disappeared, was summoned before Mr. Dorsey Tuesday afternoon. She came with her daughter, a pretty little girl, who was present during her mother's examination.

Mrs. Barrett was in a disturbed state upon emerging from the interview. As she stepped upon the threshold of the ante-room, she exclaimed, dramatically:

"If anyone has told or tells any lies on me in connection with this murder, they'll certainly suffer for it."

The daughter was heard to tell Mr. Dorsey:

"I'll talk with her tonight, and then maybe she'll do what you ask."

To avoid reporters, the woman and girl were rushed away in a cab by Detective Rosser, of police headquarters.

Relative to the new theory advanced by Solicitor Dorsey, and the rumored new suspect who may be arrested, Chief Lanford said to a Constitution reporter Tuesday afternoon that he was unaware of a new theory or probable arrest.

He and the solicitor general were closeted for two hours Tuesday morning in the former's offices at headquarters. They

only weighed the evidence now at hand and prospects for gaining new clues, the chief declared. Also, he said it was likely that he and Mr. Dorsey would hold another consultation in regard to the assistance the detective department is to give the solicitor in presenting the case before the grand jury.

Detective Chief Lanford said to a reporter for The Constitution:

"Police headquarters has as yet been unable to unearth evidence which would turn us from the theory to which we have adhered throughout the Phagan case. If another suspect has entered the mystery the city detective department is unaware of his existence. I don't believe there is such a character."

Solicitor Dorsey:

"I would rather not talk on the subject. It has been rumored over the entire city that another arrest will be made. Such might be the case. It is entirely probable. At present, however, I'm unprepared to talk. That new and plausible theories have been advanced is true. We are looking for anyone who can acquaint us with facts of the crime."

Speculation was rife Tuesday over The Constitution's report to the effect that another arrest was likely. The source of information from which the report was derived was responsible and a good deal of dependence, for that reason, was placed in the rumor.

Mystery as deep, however, as that which shrouds the murder itself, covers the identity of the strange suspect and the nature of his or her connection with the crime. Whether or not it is a man or woman is also a topic of wide speculation. Absolutely nothing can be gained from the solicitor's office, from which the new theory is being worked out.

Several days ago a representative of The Constitution secured from J. W. Coleman, stepfather of Mary Phagan, the following poem, which Mr. Coleman said his daughter had written.

In order to secure this poem and an affidavit concerning it, Solicitor General Dorsey has summoned the reporter before him today. He is of the opinion that it may aid him in his search for the murderer. It is the most complete specimen of Mary Phagan's handwriting the solicitor has been able to obtain. The poem follows [above]:

Mr. Dorsey was asked Monday morning of his views on the part Detective William J. Burns will play in the Phagan investigation. He said:

"I will welcome Mr. Burns. His reputation inspires hope. I would welcome anyone or anything which might tend to clear up the mystery."

## Three New Affidavits Filed.

Three affidavits were filed with the solicitor Monday morning. The nature of one Mr. Dorsey would not disclose. The two others, however, were obtained from Miss Maggie Wyatt, of 44 Pickett avenue, and Miss Willie M. Ross, of 250 Crew street.

Miss Wyatt is said to have attested to her knowledge of certain conditions in the pencil plant, while Miss Ross made a statement of having heard screams from the basement of the factory at 4:30 o'clock on the Saturday afternoon the murder is supposed to have been committed.

It is probable that the grand jury will hold an extra session this week to clear away the routine matters before them so as to have nothing to interfere with the exhaustive investigation it proposes to make into the girl's death. At just which time the case will be presented by the solicitor is not definitely known. Even Mr. Dorsey, himself, has stated that he is not determined in that respect.

## Mr. Dorsey's Theory.

The new theory of the solicitor general, which Tuesday created such widespread speculation, deals with the manner and the place of Mary Phagan's death, it was reported last night.

The police theory, and that generally accepted by the public, is that the victim was rendered unconscious by being struck upon the back of the skull when her head hit the planing machine on the second floor, and that her unconscious form was lowered to the basement, where, upon regaining consciousness, her screams at 4:30 o'clock were heard by the woman pedestrian who passed the plant building. Afraid that her cries would attract attention, her assailant completed the deed by strangulation.

Mr. Dorsey will not comment upon the subject. He has said, though, that he does not believe the girl met death outside the building. It is rumored that he believes the crime was committed in the basement, and that she was conscious when carried there. He will not verify even this report. Also, it is said that the new clues supposed to have been unearthed Tuesday morning corroborate, to a large extent, the solicitor's new theory.

**Officers Are Summoned.**

Corroborating, in a certain degree, the rumor that his new theory pertains to how and in what portion of the building the crime was committed, was the solicitor's action Tuesday in summoning to his office a number of the police squad who answered the negro night watchman's telephone call on the morning the body was discovered. His idea in this move, it is said, is to acquaint himself with the exact position of the corpse and the condition of the basement in which it was found.

Considerable interest is centered on the mysterious detective in his employ, whom Mr. Dorsey announces as one of America's best. At present, he is out of the city, in New York, it is rumored, investigating police records of that city and Brooklyn. He will not return, according to the solicitor, in several days.

"Certainly detective ability is not lacking in this mystery," said Chief Lanford last night. "First come the Pinkertons, the

solicitor's staff, his ‘America's greatest' sleuth, then Detective Burns—and the squad at headquarters are not inferior when it comes to efficiency. In fact, the city detectives have unearthed the larger portion of evidence now at hand.

"But a world of detectives, as good as any on earth though they be, has not solved the Phagan murder. It is one of the most mysterious mysteries of my knowledge."